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30 June 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT: Intelligence Museum Concept

The attached concept paper by [redacted] identifies a set of principles connected with the establishment of an historical museum which I would like to recommend to you. They are:

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1. Some offices - Communications is an example - have taken an historical view and already have begun to preserve technical gear which in its day raised the technology of communication to a higher plateau, or gear which has been used in notable operational cases. Other offices with less sense of history have no such program, and already may have lost or destroyed material which played a significant role in CIA's history, then became outmoded and was discarded.

Identify and Preserve
2. The task we must undertake then, well before we talk about a museum, is to identify, and tag for non-destruction, all material which is important to the history of CIA's operational development, before the material finally vanishes. This effort would involve documents, photographs, hardware and other materiel, vehicles and miscellaneous memorabilia, all henceforth called "historical material."

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3. Exhibition - the concept of a museum - is a by-product of preservation. At least initially emphasis should be given to the primary task of identifying historical material in order to arrange for its preservation, rather than to the luxury of exhibiting it. This sequence should help deflect a natural concern that the security of a sensitive device, even an outmoded one, machined into one or another piece of intelligence collection may be threatened by exhibiting in a museum. For this reason we see the museum as evolving slowly, and perhaps at several security levels.

4. The basic museum as we visualize it would not be a static collection. Instead it would be a series of displays using declassified historical material which would be

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rotated in and out of the conservancy collection. (The forthcoming exhibit of Cuban Missile Crisis photographs and hardware is a good example of endlessly interesting material which once was highly classified but now can be shown in this way.) A possible adjunct to the basic museum collection would be a small museum which we understand the DCI wants near his office, in which he could show Agency achievements to selected visitors. Other additions to the basic museum would be the small specialized museums which already exist.

Such satellite museums in our opinion should continue, and should not be superseded by a central museum. In fact we would expect these satellite museums to provide exhibits to the central museum, and to whatever small classified museum is created for the DCI.

5. No central repository need be established for all material which is designated as historical. Offices which have the space and interest in housing their own historical material (Commo, OTR, and TSD are examples) may wish to retain custody of it, so long as all items which have been accorded historical material status are recognized as being under the ultimate control of the central Agency collection. Nevertheless, at least one storage site will have to be established for the historical material from offices which lack storage space of their own. [redacted] is a possible site. Special storage arrangement may have to be made from time to time for especially sensitive items.

6. In summary we see the problem as the following:

a. Identifying, cataloguing and ^{conserving} preserving documents, photographs, hardware and other materiel, vehicles and miscellaneous memorabilia which have been significant in the development of CIA and its operations;

b. Arranging for their progressive declassification, on terms agreed to by whichever directorate used the material operationally; and

c. Exhibiting the material when exhibition would have a salutary effect on employee morale, on training, or on special problems the DCI identifies.

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We believe that a one-shot exhibit such as the Cuban Missile Crisis can be arranged under the aegis of the Intelligence Museum Committee, as is being done, but that the larger problem needs the attention of a separate commission which will attend not just to the last but to all three of the foregoing functions. Furthermore, we think it important to find a senior officer to chair the historical material commission and actively to head the program, whom the directorates will trust with the custody of historical material items which in some cases may be politically sensitive as well as highly classified. Our guess is that either the commission chairman or alternatively a curator working under his guidance will have to be employed full-time.

6. If you agree that the foregoing principles are a reasonable basis for further action I suggest that they be distributed to the deputy directors for comment, and for their recommendations of candidates to take the commission chairmanship and get the program rolling.



Chairman, Fine Arts Commission

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